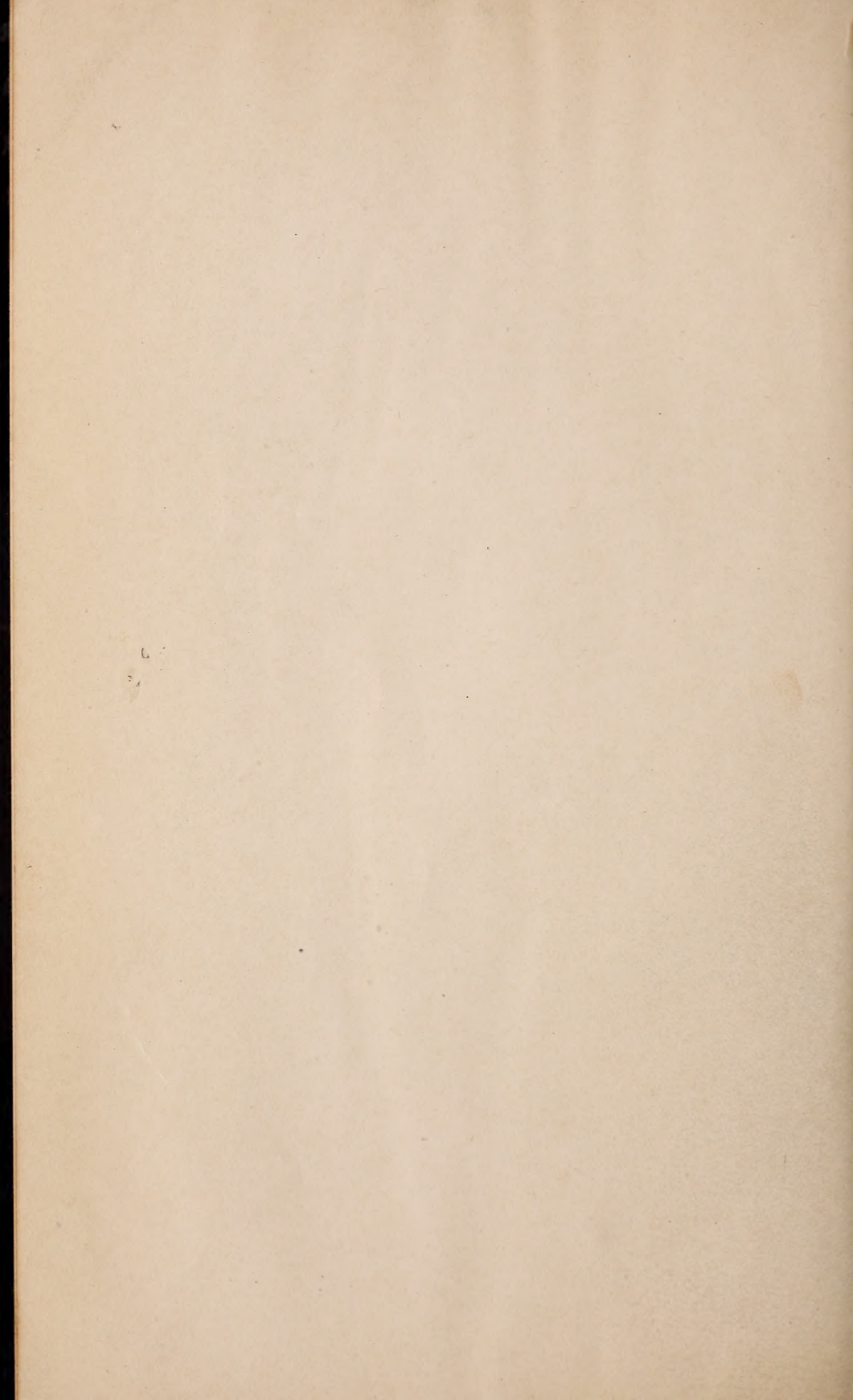


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CIRCULAR NO. I.

# United States Department of Agriculture,

## SECTION OF FOREIGN MARKETS.

[Under the immediate supervision of the Secretary of Agriculture.]

### PEACHES AND OTHER FRUITS IN ENGLAND.

Through the courtesy of Consul Lorin A. Lathrop, at Bristol, England, the representative of this Department in Great Britain, there is furnished the following practical information regarding the demand for peaches and other fruits in England, with particulars as to price, packing, etc. Parties interested and desiring to communicate directly with auctioneers and commission men handling fruit in the London market could no doubt learn of reliable firms on application to Mr. Lathrop :

English hothouse peaches begin to appear in the market in April, when they sell for 15 to 50 cents apiece. They continue right through until English-grown outdoor peaches appear in September and October. These outdoor peaches sell for 5 to 25 cents each. Both the hothouse and outdoor English peaches are large, luscious, and of highly attractive appearance. They find their way to the consumer by direct sale from the grower to the retail buyer, and they reach final hands in beautiful condition.

In June, July, and August, what are known in the trade as "fine melting" peaches come to England from France and Spain. They are shipped to commission agents at Covent Garden market, and are sold by auction on arrival, the average price being from 12 to 36 cents per dozen. Their arrival constitutes what is known in the trade as "the cheap season," which extends through July and August. They retail at 4 to 10 cents each; a really fine peach is never to be had in England for less than 8 cents. These Continental peaches reach the market in fine condition, and are packed with the utmost care in boxes of twelve. A couple of thicknesses of crumpled tissue paper is laid in the bottom of the box, the peaches are then put in, usually wrapped in tissue paper, then twisted tissue is carefully inserted between the rows in such a manner that each peach has a nest to itself. A layer of paper is placed over the top. When the cover is fastened down, it is impossible for the fruit to move, and yet it is not liable to be crushed by undue pressure.

In January, February, and early March, peaches reach the English market from the Cape of Good Hope, brought over in cool chambers. They are packed in boxes containing from 40 to 50, and they bring from \$2 to \$5 per box according to quality and condition. The average price runs about \$2.50. They have the advantage of reaching a market entirely clear of similar fruits, and this advantage is to be seen in the price they bring.

If peaches can be successfully supplied to the English market from the Cape, there is of course no reason why we can not ship with equal success from the United States. We should not have the advantage of a winter market nor of winter prices, and we should have to meet English-grown and Continental fruits; but fine peaches arriving in good condition will always fetch a good price.

The first essential toward getting our fruit in prime condition to England is the condition of the peach when pulled. As the peach—unlike the pear—will not color after pulling, it must be colored before picking; and it must also be fully developed. It must also be hard, or it will not travel. Color, development, hardness—these are the three things necessary.

The second essential is the sort of peach. It is important to note that clingstones never bring the same prices in England as the freestones. Under ordinary circumstances, a shipment of clings from our country to England would entail disappointment, and they should not be sent.

The third essential is the packing. The French method above described can not be surpassed, but it might entail an expense without insuring results better than might be attained by the use of the card paper pigeon holes. If this card paper be used, the fruit should have a double wrapping of paper, and should be so placed that it can not move in any direction. It is desirable that there should be but one layer to a box. Those from the Cape are packed four deep; but this method is regarded with some distrust by experts at Covent Garden. Each box might contain a dozen, and then six boxes should be tied together for convenience of handling and to cheapen the small toll exacted at Covent Garden per package. This toll is about 2 cents per package, and is usually paid by the commission merchant and auctioneer out of his commission of 5 per cent.

There seems to be no reason why chilled chambers already prepared in vessels for transporting meat should not be available for peaches. Experience might show that a temperature of 35 degrees would be a little low, but this can only be tested by actual trial.

All that has been said above will apply to nectarines. For fine large nectarines there is always a good market.

Bartlett pears—called in England usually the Williams pear—always sell well, and those from California have attained a high repute in England. They pack them in four tiers in California, but it is believed that there would be less chance of bruising if there were only two tiers. These pears may be picked quite green, but they should be developed.

Shipments should be made direct to the commission merchant at Covent Garden; but without previously sending him an English reference, or otherwise protecting him, he would not pay freight upon consignments from an unknown shipper. The fruit may have "gone wrong" and he would have no means of recouping himself.

The auction market is open every day except Sundays and holidays, but sales made upon Tuesdays and Saturdays bring unsatisfactory prices as compared with other days.

The purpose of the Section of Foreign Markets is to furnish information on the world's markets, with special reference to their demands for agricultural products. Bulletin No. 1, already issued, relates to Great Britain and Ireland, and the accompanying circular is supplementary thereto. Bulletin No. 2, Germany, is now in press, and Bulletins Nos. 3 and 4, on Russia and France, are now in preparation.

